

What is claimed is:

[Claim 1] A method for facilitating use of a transaction account, comprising the steps of:

establishing a first transaction account and a second transaction account, wherein said first and second transaction accounts are associated with first and second transaction account identifiers, respectively;

associating said first and second transaction account identifiers with a common account identifier;

receiving, at a transaction processing system, said common account identifier;

recognizing said common account identifier as being associated with more than one account;

determining, based on selection criteria, at least one of said first and second transaction accounts to access for processing said transaction, resulting in a selected transaction account;

accessing said selected transaction account based on said determining step; and

processing the transaction via said selected transaction account.

[Claim 2] The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of sending one bill to an account holder associated with said common account identifier, wherein said bill reporting information relates to both of said first and second transaction accounts.

[Claim 3] The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of replacing said common account identifier with one of said first and second transaction

account identifier associated with said selected transaction account during at least one of the accessing and processing steps.

[Claim 4] The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a reconciliation file including said common account identifier;

recognizing said common account identifier as being associated with more than one account;

determining, based on said selection criteria, at least one of said first and second transaction accounts to access for processing said transaction, resulting in a selected transaction account;

accessing said selected transaction account system based on said determining step; and

processing the reconciliation file via a system associated with said selected transaction account.

[Claim 5] The method of claim 1 wherein said common account identifier is identical to at least one of said first and second transaction account identifiers.

[Claim 6] The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of a user associating a common account identifier with said first and second transaction accounts.

[Claim 7] The method of claim 1, wherein said selection criteria may be modified by a user of said first and second transaction accounts.

[Claim 8] The method of claim 1, further comprising a settlement process comprising the steps of:

processing a request for payment to said merchant when said merchant submits a settlement record associated with said common account identifier;

recording transactions processed as settlement records in a settlement table; and

paying said merchant.

[Claim 9] A system for processing transactions comprising:

a first transaction account associated with a first transaction account identifier;

a second transaction account associated with a second transaction account identifier, wherein said first and second transaction accounts are associated with a common account identifier; and

a selection criteria engine configured to determine, in substantially real time, which one of said first and said second transaction accounts to access during a financial transaction.

[Claim 10] The system of claim 9, wherein said first and second transaction account each comprise at least one of a credit account, debit account, loyalty account, phone card account and a stored value account.

[Claim 11] The system of claim 9, wherein said first and second transaction account each comprise at least one of a credit account, debit account, loyalty account, phone card account and a stored value account, and wherein one of said first and second transaction accounts is represented by a physical instrument having associated therewith indicia representing said common account identifier.

[Claim 12] The system of claim 9, wherein the common account identifier is the first transaction account identifier.

[Claim 13] The system of claim 9, wherein the common account identifier is the first transaction account identifier, and wherein said first transaction account comprises a credit account.

[Claim 14] The system of claim 9, wherein at least one of said first transaction account identifier, said second transaction account identifier and said common account identifier is associated with a transaction card.

[Claim 15] The system of claim 9, wherein said first transaction account comprises a credit account and said second transaction account comprises a stored value account, and wherein one of said first and second transaction accounts is represented by a physical instrument having associated therewith indicia representing said common account identifier, and wherein at least one of said first transaction account identifier, said second transaction account identifier and said common account identifier is associated with a transaction card.

[Claim 16] The system of claim 9, wherein said selection criteria comprise at least one of transaction specific input based criteria and default criteria.

[Claim 17] The system of claim 9, wherein said selection criteria comprise at least one of transaction specific input based criteria and default criteria, and wherein said transaction specific input based criteria comprises at least one of pin differentiation, prompts at an ATM, and prompts at a POS terminal.

[Claim 18] The system of claim 9, wherein said selection criteria comprise at least one of transaction specific input based criteria and default criteria, and wherein said default criteria comprise at least one of owner selected rules and card provider rules.

[Claim 19] The system of claim 9, wherein said selection criteria comprise at least one of transaction specific input based criteria and default criteria, and wherein said default criteria comprise at least one of minimum fund amount rules, maximum fund amount rules, type of transaction rules, and type of merchant rules.

[Claim 20] The system of claim 9, wherein said selection criteria comprise at least one of transaction specific input based criteria and default criteria, and

wherein said default criteria comprise always accessing the stored value card unless funds are not sufficient on said stored value card, whereupon the credit card account is accessed.

[Claim 21] The system of claim 9, wherein a single billing statement is presented showing information about transactions on the credit card account and the stored value account.

[Claim 22] A process comprising the steps of:

receiving transaction request information from a cardholder via a remote terminal, wherein said request comprises a common transaction account identifier; and

processing said common transaction account identifier to determine which cardholder transaction accounts are associated therewith, wherein only one of said card holder transaction accounts comprise a credit card account.

[Claim 23] The process of claim 22, wherein another of said card holder transaction accounts comprises a stored value account.

[Claim 24] The process of claim 22, wherein at least one of said cardholder transaction accounts is an external transaction account.

[Claim 25] The process of claim 22, wherein said remote terminal is a card reader.